

Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-07

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TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 075485

STADIS////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, PLOS, LY, TS, IT

SUBJECT: POSITION OF ITALIAN DRILLING RIG SCARABEO IV
IN RELATION TO TUNISIAN AND LIBYAN CLAIMS

REF: TUNIS 2210

1. MEETING OF DEPT. GEOGRAPHER HODGSON WITH TUNISIAN
OFFICIALS INCLUDING ROUOU RELATED ONLY TO GEOGRAPHICAL
BASES FOR TUNISIAN TERRITORIAL SHELF CLAIMS, AND DID NOT
COVER LOCATION OF ACTIVE OR POTENTIAL TUNISIAN OR LIBYAN
DRILLING. ACTIVITIES OF SCARABEO IV WERE NOT DISCUSSED.
TUNISIANS DISPLAYED THEIR OWN MANUSCRIPT MAP, WHICH CON-
TAINED NUMEROUS LINES AND SYMBOLS IN MARITIME AREA BETWEEN
LIBYA AND TUNISIA. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ONE OF SYMBOLS WAS
SITE OF SCARABEO IV ACTIVITY.

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PAGE 02 STATE 075485

2. AS FOR "FIVE POSSIBLE LINES SHOWN ON DEPARTMENT MAP",
WE CAN ONLY SURMISE THAT BEN REDGEB WAS REFERRING TO MAP
IN LEGAL BRIEF PREPARED FOR BUTTES BY LAW FIRM OF NORTH-
CUTT ELY, WHICH SHOWS FIVE DIFFERENT EQUIDISTANT LINES RELA-
TING TO VARIOUS BASELINES THAT TUNISIA MIGHT CLAIM ON HISTOR-
ICAL OR LEGAL BASES. SCARABEO IV DRILL SITE, AS REPORTED TO

DEPARTMENT, IS ON TUNISIAN SIDE OF ONLY FOUR OF THESE FIVE

LINES. FYI ELY SOUGHT HODGSON'S ADVICE BEFORE PREPARING BRIEF AND THIS FACT, IF KNOWN TO TUNIS, MAY LEAD TO CERTAIN CONFUSION OVER SOURCE OF MAP. END FYI. IN ADDITION TO FIVE VARIANTS GIVEN BY ELY ROUROU, BELAID AND HODGSON DISCUSSED POTENTIAL BOUNDARY LINE DRAWN ON THE BASIS OF "NATURAL PROLONGATION" TAKING ACCOUNT OF UNDERSEA MORPHOLOGY. THIS TYPE OF BOUNDARY WAS SANCTIONED BY ICJ NORTH SEA CONTINENTAL SHELF CASES. TUNISIANS TOOK A MAP PROVIDED BY GEOGRAPHER BACK TO TUNIS, BUT IT SHOWED TWO LINES ONLY; (1) AN EQUIDISTANT LINE BASED UPON LOW-WATER BASELINE; AND (2) NATURAL PROLONGATION LINE. DRILL SITE IS ON TUNISIAN SIDE OF BOTH THESE LINES.

3. FOR TRIPOLI: COMPLICATING FACTOR RE BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF LIBYAN TUNISIAN CONTROVERSY OVER SHELF ISSUES IS THE FACT THAT LIBYANS HAVE NOT TO OUR KNOWLEDGE DRAWN A BOUNDARY LINE THAT REPRESENTS EXTENT OF THEIR CLAIMS. NOR DO WE HAVE ANY INFORMATION BEYOND SKETCH MAPS OF LIMITS OF ALL SAVE ONE LIBYAN CONCESSIONS FOR OFFSHORE EXPLORATION. IN PARTICULAR, WE NEED COORDINATES FOR CONCESSIONS AT NORTH AND WEST MARGINS OF LIBYAN SHELF, WHICH ARE APPARENTLY DESIGNATED L-1, L-2, AND L-3. REQUEST EMBASSY FORWARD ANY INFO FROM FILES, OFFICIAL GAZETTES OR OTHER SOURCES ON BOUNDARIES OF THESE CONCESSION AREAS. SUGGEST THAT MATERIAL ALSO BE SENT INFO TO TUNIS.

4. FOR TUNIS: MANUSCRIPT MAPS SHOWN TO HODGSON BY
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PAGE 03 STATE 075485

TUNISIANS PURPORTED TO SHOW ITALO-TUNISIAN AND ITALO-MALTESE SHELF AGREEMENT LINES. REQUEST THAT EMBASSY ASCERTAIN FROM ROUROU OR OTHER SOURCE COORDINATES OF THESE LINES, WHICH WE DO NOT HAVE, AS AN AID TO ASSESSING OF LIBYAN-TUNISIAN BOUNDARY PROBLEM. IF TUNISIANS RELUCTANT TO SUPPLY INFORMATION DUE TO SENSITIVITY OF THE MALTESE QUESTION, YOU COULD ASSURE THEM THAT GEOGRAPHER WOULD USE IT ONLY FOR CLASSIFIED DISPLAYS WITHIN DEPARTMENT AND OTHER INTERESTED USG AGENCIES.

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